



A Bureau

Talking Tourism with the Department of Conservation and Land Management
Director

Attractions and facilities



WA Environment and Heritage Minister Judy Edwards is pictured at the CALMTIE Exhibition with Helen McAuley from Penguin and Seal Island Cruises, and the Ranger-in-Charge at Shoalwater Islands, Terry Goodlich. Shoalwater Islands Marine Park is one of the main ecotourism destinations in WA.

NEW REGULATIONS GAZETTED

New regulations covering a wide range of activities in national parks and reserves have been brought into effect.

Acting Director of Parks and Visitor Services, Colin Ingram said the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* integrated provisions of the *Forest Management Regulations 1993*, *Wildlife Conservation Regulations 1970*, *National Parks Authority Regulations* and the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 1992*, which included licensing commercial tour operators.

"This means that for the first time, all the regulations applicable to the State's parks and reserves are presented in the one place which assists equal application to recreational visitors as well as those who visit with commercial operators," he said.

While most of the regulations have been in place through various other pieces of legislation for many years, the new regulations incorporate all licensing regulations under which tour operator's licenses will be granted.

He added that all tour operators who visited WA's parks and reserves should familiarise themselves with the Regulations available from the State Law Publisher's web site (<http://www.slp.wa.gov.au>).

For further information, contact Rod Quartermain on (08) 9334 0562 or email rodq@calm.wa.gov.au

ECOTOURISM CONFERENCE AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE A SUCCESS

More than 180 people, including students, industry and government agencies celebrated WA's major event for the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE2002) at the Aquarium of Western Australia (AQWA) in May.

Business Development Coordinator, Rod Quartermain said *WA Tourism: In Touch with a Sustainable Future* creatively integrated the objectives of Forum Advocating Cultural and Ecotourism's (FACET's) annual conference and the Department's annual Tourism Information Exchange, otherwise known as CALMTIE.

"Convened by FACET, a Steering Committee structured a program that encouraged both the government and industry to explore existing and new opportunities for innovative and sustainable nature tourism experiences," he said.

"The first day of the conference showcased world-class examples of best practice ecotourism and invited key industry decision makers to workshop major issues affecting the industry including accreditation, public liability insurance and licensing.

"The second day provided delegates with the opportunity to explore future business opportunities and understand and appreciate the biological importance of the fragile resources they rely on for business growth.

"The Department was extremely pleased with the event's outcomes, including the media that assisted in reaching a far greater audience than the Steering Committee anticipated."

Mr Quartermain said working with FACET, and other sponsors including WA Tourism Commission, Fisheries and Rottneest Island Authority, has and will continue to deliver huge benefits to the Department and the growing nature tourism industry.

For further information, contact Rod Quartermain on (08) 9334 0562 or email rodq@calm.wa.gov.au



Around the Regions

MID WEST

A Recreation and Tourism Plan for the **Shark Bay World Heritage Property** is being produced. The aim is to provide strategic direction and operational guidelines that protect environmental integrity and facilitate a range of quality nature-based activities and experiences.

For further information, contact Sue Hancock on (08) 9921 5955 or email susanh@calm.wa.gov.au

Francois Peron National Park: Most of the northern 4WD access road towards Cape Peron has been realigned as the initial stage of road upgrading in the park. Bottle Bay campsite will soon be upgraded. Cliff-top lookouts will be constructed at Skipjack Point, and picnic facilities are being developed at Cape Peron.

Monkey Mia Reserve: The Visitor Centre sales and tour booking service have relocated from the beachfront to the entry of the Monkey Mia Visitor Centre to incorporate the art gallery and visitor information displays. For further information, contact Carl Beck on (08) 9948 1208 or email carlb@calm.wa.gov.au

Kalbarri National Park: Paths to Natural Bridge and Castle Cove lookouts are being surfaced to improve access to each site. With the assistance of Kalbarri High School students and Coastwest Coastcare funding, staff will begin to extensively rehabilitate the area, starting with the installation of rabbit control fencing along the adjacent cliff tops.

The parking area at Hawks Head has been redeveloped to improve access for coaches and long vehicles. Further improvements include a shaded picnic shelter and composting toilets.

For further information, contact Mike Paxman on (08) 9937 1140 or email mikep@calm.wa.gov.au

Nambung National Park: Contractors are sealing the final six kilometres of the Pinnacles Drive. Design firm Woodhead International is preparing a concept development study for a visitor centre that aims to enhance visitor appreciation of the region's natural and cultural values. Visitors are being surveyed and tour operators contacted to assist the planning process.

For further information, contact Peter Fishwick on (08) 9652 1911 or email peterf@calm.wa.gov.au

SWAN

New koalas for Yanchep National Park

Yanchep National Park's koala breeding colony has been bolstered with the arrival of two animals from Tasmania and a new cuddly baby born to famous Euca and Gumnut.

Euca is one of a set of twins that made history in 1996 when they were born at Yanchep National Park north of Perth. They were the first recorded twin koalas born in captivity in Western Australia, and the second to survive in captivity in the world.

Although the 'baby' was born six months ago, it has spent that time in Euca's pouch and has only just emerged. She'll stay with her mother for another four months when she'll be weaned.

Mother and baby are doing well and can be seen at Perth's natural and cultural meeting place, Yanchep National Park.

The Department will soon announce details of a competition to name the new baby and the two koalas that were recently brought to the Park from Tasmania.

For further information, contact Phil Smeeton on (08) 9561 2444 or email philsm@calm.wa.gov.au

REGIONAL PARKS

The Regional Parks Unit has commenced a large-scale installation of the new sign system at the eight regional parks in the metropolitan area. The signs provide direction, orientation and management information as well as visitor interpretation.

Rockingham Lakes Regional Park: Staff are working on several improvements to the Point Peron recreational site including reshaping the southern car park, sealing the existing access road, stabilising limestone paths, kerbing, line marking, and installing a feature retaining wall, seating and signage.

Yellagonga Regional Park: Approximately 2.5 kilometres of dual-use paths and 1.5 kilometres of limestone paths are being constructed around the numerous lakes and swamps to provide a link between recreational and natural bushland sites in the park.

Jervoise Bay Conservation and Recreation Enhancement Plan: A new grass recreation area and redeveloped car park have been completed at John Graham Recreation Reserve. Staff installed a memorial stone to commemorate the early settlers of Clarence, and are constructing a lookout with seating for visitors to enjoy the surrounds.

A sealed access road and car park at the Woodman Point Headland has replaced the numerous limestone tracks and parking areas. A seat carved from an old telegraph pole is being installed at the end of a new limestone track as a focal point for visitors to the park. Large wooden bench seats, constructed of recycled wharf timber, are being installed at strategic viewing areas.

For further information, contact Amanda Smith on (08) 9431 6506 or email amandas@calm.wa.gov.au

WELLINGTON

Leschenault Peninsula: The entrance to the Peninsula has been upgraded with the new John Boyle O'Reilly facility. The facility includes a 600 metre walk trail of raised boardwalks and concrete paths that meander through tuart and peppermint trees and the surrounding wetlands.

Visitors can learn about JB O'Reilly's history in the information shelter at the beginning of the trail. Visitors with more time can relax and enjoy the numerous shelters, seating and platform areas.

Wellington National Park: Recent improvements to the King Tree Recreation site's parking area, interpretation panels, boardwalks and viewing platform have improved access and should ensure this site continues to become a popular attraction for visitors from all walks of life.

Staff recently completed extensions to the Wellington Discovery Forest building including a verandah, new storeroom and additional toilets. The facility is used for the Wellington Discovery Forest Education Program. Last year, approximately 2400 students participated in the forest program. Bookings and information can be obtained from the Department's Collie office.

The Wellington Dam Quarry toilets have had major upgrades, as well as the sections of Lennard Drive and River Road between the dam and Honeymoon Pool.

For further information, contact Peter Henderson on (08) 9725 5907 or email phenderson@calm.wa.gov.au

SOUTH WEST

Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park: Car parks at Canal Rocks and Lefthanders were recently constructed to improve access for the increasing number of visitors to the park. The one-way loop car parks are designed to provide a variety of users with access to popular coastal viewing points. New lookouts, accessible for people with disabilities have been constructed at both car parks. Canal Rocks has parking for one 52-seat coach.

A sheltered gas cooking area has been constructed in the Conto campground. This facility provides protection from the inclement weather experienced throughout the winter months. The shelter complements other improvements to the site including a reception building (operational throughout summer) and employment of an on-site Ranger to assist campers on a regular basis.

Staff constructed a group campsite at Chapman Pool in Warner Glen to provide school groups and licensed commercial tour operators with access to the Blackwood River for canoeing and other activities. Other improvements to the site include a sheltered gas cooking area, and a boat and canoe launch ramp.

WARREN /DONNELLY

Lake Muir Observatory: This is now open for the public to enjoy. A 100 metre elevated boardwalk leads visitors to a shelter overlooking the vast wetlands of the lake. The site also has picnic facilities, toilets and parking available for coaches.

Mount Chudalup: Situated near Pt D'Entrecasteaux and Windy Harbour, the site is undergoing considerable redevelopment with interpretive shelters and picnic facilities under

construction. The new car park allows access for more vehicles and coaches, and toilet provides comfort for all visitors.

Boorara Tree and Lane Poole Falls: A replica fire lookout cabin with interpretive information has been constructed to enhance the visitor's perception of the area and its potential threats.

For further information please contact David Meehan on (08) 97 761207 or email davidme@calm.wa.gov.au

NEW VISITOR FACILITIES AT BLUFF KNOLL

A \$400,000 project for new visitor facilities will soon commence at the popular tourist attraction Bluff Knoll, in Stirling Range National Park.

The new facilities have been designed to cater for the growing number of people who visit the site at car park level without climbing to the top of the bluff. Two thirds of visitors do not climb to the top of the knoll for many reasons and the car park provides people with panoramic views of other peaks in the range plus extensive views of the surrounding farmland.

South Coast Regional Leader of Parks and Visitor Services, Peter Bidwell says the \$400,000 project will go to tender next month.

"Once the successful tenderer is determined, final dates will be set for the closure of access to Bluff Knoll to facilitate construction on site," Mr Bidwell said.

"We anticipate the project will take approximately four weeks to complete with works commencing on 1 November 2002.

"We hope to reopen Bluff Knoll on 15 December 2002, in time for the Christmas school holiday period."

Mr Bidwell said the development would see the car park surrounded by a raised steel walkway providing access to three new viewing platforms, a picnic shelter and an interpretive shelter.

"The interpretive shelter will be on a large decked area, providing views of the range and will serve as an assembly area for talks and cultural tours," he said.

"The car park will also be expanded to cater for 50 cars and three long coach bays.

"All existing buildings will be removed and a new composting toilet block will replace the old flush type."

Mr Bidwell said the project would hopefully be a forerunner to the possible establishment of a visitor centre for the park on Bluff Knoll Road. Updates on the project will be available on NatureBase in the "What's On" section.

Please note that the park will be closed to visitors for four weeks during the redevelopment.

For further information on the closure or the project, please contact Peter Bidwell or Martin Lloyd at the Albany Regional Office on (08) 9842 4500.

Info Updates for Tour Operators

ACCREDITATION AIDS

Tourism businesses no longer need to spend months preparing to complete the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP) following the Ecotourism Association of Australia's decision to employ accreditation assessors in WA.

Jenny Nichol of Nichol Business Enterprises, and Liz Jack of the Centre of Sustainable Research were targeted to join the EAA team and assist tour operators achieve nature or ecotourism accreditation.

Ms Nichol said she was bewildered at the small number of products accredited in Western Australia in spite of our major natural competitive advantage, and scope of natural experiences.

"Our aim is to provide industry, protected area managers, local communities and travellers with an assurance that an accredited product is backed by a commitment to best practice, ecological sustainability, natural area management and the provision of quality ecotourism experiences," said Ms Nichol.

"Furthermore, NEAP is growing and is now being exported as the International Ecotourism Standard."

Ms Nichol and Ms Jack are able to provide assistance to businesses interested in pursuing NEAP accreditation by:

- providing NEAP 'readiness' assessment (eg. business, or product appraisal);
- assisting NEAP applications;
- helping to provide opportunities to adopt best practice in marketing, partnerships, sustainable practices and identifying opportunities for efficiencies;
- training staff in NEAP and best practice ecotourism;
- assisting research, marketing and interpretation, planning and implementation; and
- helping develop new ecotourism products.

"With the Department of Conservation and Land Management's incentive for longer-term licensing and the Western Australian Tourism Commission's discounted marketing campaigns, it is important for operators to achieve accreditation and begin reaping the rewards," she said.

For further information, please contact Jenny

Nichol on 0417 978 919 or email jennynichol@bigpond.com, or Liz Jack on 0409 109 161 or email cms@highway1.com.au

NEGOTIATIONS UNDER WAY FOR MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH WEST LIGHTHOUSES

The Department has begun negotiations for the management and lease arrangements for the Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse precincts in the State's south west.

The Department's Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara said the negotiations with the Cape Naturaliste Tourism Association and the Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association were the result of a comprehensive Expressions of Interest process which began last October.

"Expressions of Interest for proposals to manage and develop visitor facilities and services at the two lighthouse sites were advertised nationally with submissions closing in December," he said.

"Eight submissions were received and thoroughly evaluated by an assessment panel comprised of representatives from the Department, the Heritage Council of WA and the Western Australian Tourism Commission".

"From the submissions received, four were short-listed and invited to provide more detailed and costed submissions of which two have been chosen by the panel."

Mr McNamara said both proposals involved significant capital investment that would improve the visitor experience and assist in management of the sites

"Negotiations are under way with the two proponents to determine terms and guidelines of the lease arrangements," he said.

"A key part of this is to ensure the environmental and heritage aspects of the lighthouses are top priorities for any management plans and to ensure any works do not impinge of these values."

Final approval for the projects rests with the Minister for the Environment and Heritage after consultation with the Conservation Commission of Western Australia.

For further information, please contact Colin Ingram on (08) 9334 0576 or email colini@calm.wa.gov.au

YOU WERE WONDERING?

Touring Western Australia is a newsletter produced by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to keep the tourism industry informed about developments that affect the industry. If you have a query regarding any of the Department's tourism policies, activities or developments, we would be pleased to answer these in future editions of the newsletter. Enquiries can be sent to *Touring Western Australia*. Fax: (08) 9334 0253 or email (rodq@calm.wa.gov.au).